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"Teach me to pray": the prayerological structure of the novel *Anna Karenina* of L.N. Tolstoy in the context of Christian Revival in the last half of 19th century

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Abstract – The role of prayers in the themes of Anna Karenina is considered. It is noted that Leo Tolstoy typology of characters is based on their attitude to prayers and praying. The paper analyzes origins and textual parallels of Levin's prayers on the background of Christian revival in Russia during Alexander II's reign, as well as certain aspects of Tolstoy *prayerology* (i.e. theology and theory of prayer, concept of prayer).

Keywords – Leo Tolstoy; *Anna Karenina*; Konstantin Levin; Prayer; Henry Suso.

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"Teach me to pray": the prayerological structure of the novel *Anna Karenina* of L.N. Tolstoy in the context of Christian Revival in the last half of 19th century*

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1. Introduction

"Tolstoy's diary entries (from the earliest to the latest) show his long attempts to find forms of prayer to God, the inner tension of the problem of prayer itself, and demonstrate the struggle between "I deny" and "I admit". The question "How to pray?" posed not only in *The Three Hermits / The Three Elders*, but also Konstantin Levin is tormented by this question" (Grodetskaya, *Otvety predaniya* 68-9).

The evolution of Leo Tolstoy's religious philosophy in the context of the Russian religious revival of the 1860–80s, and the global Religious revival (incl. the Christian revival) of the second half of the 20th century is well documented, but relatively little systematic study has been done.[1] The reflection of this evolution in his texts of this period has been studied even less.

Meanwhile, the difference between Tolstoy's religious views in 1873 (the beginning of the work on *Anna Karenina*), in 1875 (the beginning serial publication of the first chapters), and in 1878 (the first full text publication) is obvious. In 1873, Tolstoy was, or aspired to be, an Orthodox believer, but since 1878 he embarked on the path of harsh criticism of the Orthodoxy.

Chronologically the novel concept was born in February 1870, soon after the «Arzamas horror»[2] experienced by Leo Tolstoy. This very disturbing psychical and mystical experience defined directions of his spiritual pursuits. The completion of the work on *Anna Karenina*, its publication (permission from the censor to publish the entire novel, including the final part VIII, was granted on June 25, 1877), as well as Tolstoy's first trip to Optina pustyn monastery (July 1877) immediately preceded the work on *My Confession* (i.e. *A Confession*; 1879-80/1882).

While he was working on *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy's mind was concerned with a growing fear of death and a thirst for faith and salvation. During these years the form of *A Confession* and the concepts of other resonant works were maturing latently within him. On the 30th November 1875 he sent a letter to Nikolay Strakhov containing the fragment *Why do I write?*

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[1] Earlier studies of this topic are Blavatsky; Nash; Shahovskoy; and later ones: works by Heier; Medzhibovskaya; Hamburg; Berman; Zwahlen.

[2] "[For the rest of his life, the 'Arzamas horror'] flickered at the edges of his consciousness" (Gorky 34, translated by Lake Smith). Other English variants of this phrase: "All his life he feared and hated death, all his life there throbbed in his soul the 'Arsamaxian *terror*'" (*Reminiscences of Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy by Maxim Gorky*); "All of his life the *'Arzamas terror*' was fluttering about near his soul" (by U.R.Bowie).

(*Dlya chego ya pishu?*; 62: 226-8).[3] At the end of 1877, he drafted a philosophical colloquy *Interlocutors* where for the first time the main persona of his future story *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* appeared: "*Me.* Ivan Ilyich. — 49 years of age" (17: 368).

An objective assessment of general trends in the evolution of Tolstoy's attitude to Christianity can be made by analyzing the descriptions of prayers in his novel and correspondence.

S.A. Tolstaya described Tolstoy's time spent working on *Anna Karenina* as years of "*the long struggle of unbelief and desire for faith*"[4] (S. Tolstoy 505). She wrote in her diary: "Now [Leo Tolstoy] *hopes* that the time is approaching when *he will become a fully religious person*" (Note of March 3, 1877; 503). It is noteworthy that the beginning of work on a "novel of modern life" (i.e., the future *Anna Karenina*) with the words "This is how one should write!"[5] and the final editing coincided with Lent and Easter.[6]

Also Tolstoy's moods during these years and his attitude to the work of prayer can be gauged from his letter to Sergey S. Urusov: "*I do not believe in prayer and am unable to pray*, but if the truth is that which you believe in, then you may pray, and your prayer may be heard; and *therefore pray for God to give me the support of faith*" (February 21, 1876; 62: 249).

The essence of Tolstoy's spiritual doubts is particularly evident in the first chapter of *What I Believe*:

> I was not satisfied with the declarations of the theologians that the Sermon on the Mount was only an indication of the degree of perfection to which man should aspire; that man, weighed down by sin, could not reach such an ideal; and that the salvation of humanity was in faith and prayer and grace. (transl. by H. Smith)[7]

In *Anna Karenina*, as well as in *My Confession* and other works written on the cusp of the 1870s and 80s[8], Tolstoy constantly considered the dialectics of nature of sin and fair punishment for sin ↔ Divine retribution / Divine predestination[9] ↔ confession and prayer ↔ good deeds and virtues ↔ faith ↔ God's mercy and grace ↔ salvation.

[3] The links to the academic Complete Works of Leo Tolstoy in 90 volumes are henceforth given in the text by volume and page numbers.

[4] Henceforth in quotes emphasis is mine.

[5] There are some parallels between Tolstoy's novel and the draft of Pushkin's unfinished work *The guests were arriving at the dacha*. For more information, see: Lönnqvist.

[6] "March, the beginning of April are my most hard-working months" (Tolstoy's letter to a renowned Russian poet Afanasy Fet (Foeth). March 22-23, 1877; 62: 315-316). Work was begun between February 19 — April 7 according to the old style (March 3 — April 19, new style), 1873 and was completed on April 8/20; and in 1877, correspondingly, — February 7/19 — March 26/April 7 and March 27/April 8.

[7] "Indeed, it is very hard to find any moral application for the most immoral of dogmas, whose aim it is to justify and permit vices and give an income to the hierarchy, but still we find *à propos*: (1) to pray to God that he may give us grace; (2) to thank God; (3) again to pray; (4) to follow the inspiration of grace; (5) man who has become as innocent as Adam ought to try to become innocent; (6) 'let us walk with a true heart in the substance of faith to the throne of grace!'"(*A Critique of dogmatic theology*. 23: 248; Wiener 370-371).

[8] *A Critique of dogmatic theology*, *What I Believe* (i.e. *My Religion*), etc.

[9] Prior to this, in 1857, I.S. Turgenev noted Tolstoy's lasting interest in Calvinist doctrine: "A mixture of poet, Calvinist, fanatic and lordling; something reminiscent of Rousseau, but more honest than Rousseau" (Turgenev, *Pis'mo P.V.Annenkovu* 219).

2. Literature review

The connections between *Anna Karenina* and Tolstoy religious philosophy were to a certain extent examined in the works of Russian literary critics during the Soviet period known as the "thaw" and towards its end (Gusev; Zhdanov; Eikhenbaum; Asmus; Zaydenshnur; Galagan; Men). Their research has been continued by modern literary scholars – Gromova-Opul'skaia; Grodetskaya; Dunaev; Uzhankov; Ranchin; Pichurina; Varakina).

Earlier, in 1953, a Russian religious philosopher and white émigré publicist Ivan Ilyin analyzed several of Tolstoy's prayers in the context of the tradition of Christian and even pre-Christian prayers in *Axioms of religious experience*. But this book published in Paris in Russian in the pre-1918 orthography, then passed almost unnoticed neither in the West nor in the East.

Later, *Tolstoy novel Anna Karenina in the light of an epigraph from Moses Deuteronomy* by P. Goldstein (in Russian), and especially R. Gustafsson's monograph (1986) had attracted attention from researchers to this topic and were followed by many other works, including a number devoted to the theological aspects of Tolstoy creative heritage (e.g. Leblanc; Orwin; Kirichenko; Orekhanov; Avalon; Mendeleev; Orehanov; Moulin; Moran).

In recent decades, there has been a tendency among Catholic sources to interpret Tolstoy's religious ideas through the prism of "Ignatian spirituality" (e.g.: Modras, *Ignatian Humanism* 286; Lacoste*, Encyclopedia*…; Manney; Townsend).

However, despite all the interest in this topic among researchers, there has thus far been no special study of the evolution of the attitude of L.N. Tolstoy towards Christian prayers in 1870s.

3. Methods

In a letter to S.A. Rachinsky (January 27, 1878), L.N. Tolstoy remarked upon the "architectural" narrative structure in *Anna Karenina* in the following way:

> I am very proud of architecture [of *Anna Karenina*] — its vaults are joined so that one cannot even notice where the keystone is. And that's what I was trying to do first of all. The unity in the structure is created not by *a fabula* [i.e., events and actions] and not by relationships [acquaintance] between the characters, but by an inner connectivity. (62: 377)

One of those narrative "keystones" in the novel is the theme, or the leitmotif of prayers. Sentimentalist authors preferred the genres of diaries and intimate correspondence (the epistolary novel) to achieve a deeper insight into the psychology of the characters they portrayed. Romantic poets opened secrets of hearts of their heroes using expressive techniques of a "deathbed confession" or "autothanatography" (Mary Shelley, Byron, Lermontov, etc.). Similarly, Tolstoy's technique of describing "the dialectic of the soul" (i.e., the psychological dynamics, *psychologism*[10]) was based on the internal monologues of his characters, and their introspection in moments of prayer.

One of the innovations of *Tolstoy psychologism* was based on the understanding that prayer reflects the subtle nuances of human psychology – the perception of the world, self-knowledge, introspection and the motivational spectrum of those who pray.

Based on these assumptions, all episodes of prayers in *Anna Karenina* (incl. rough drafts excluded from the final text of the novel) were examined and classified according to a system

[10] "Psychologism […] was understood by Russian critics not so much as a literary method, but as a means for objectively examining the human soul, placing it in its true (i.e., non-Romantic) relationship with social reality" (Vinitsky 122).

of criteria: psychological motives for using prayers, situations of prayers, emotions caused by prayers, as well as parallels of Levin' prayers in the Christian tradition.

4. Results and discussion

In *Anna Karenina*, the attitude towards prayer (such as inner and public praying, knowing how to pray, conscious or routine attending worship services, etc.) is the dominant theme of Tolstoy's literary system of character types.

The first-time readers meet with the word '(to) pray' in the novel in the speech of nanny Matrona[11] Philimonovna. Her phrase: "You do your part. God is merciful; *pray to God*, sir, *pray to God*"[12] (18: 8), on the one hand corresponds clearly to the original Church Slavonic epigraph from Romans 12:29,[13] "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Мнѣ отмщеніе, и Азъ воздамъ), referring to the words of Deuteronomy 32:35 and 37: "Vengeance is Mine, and recompense […] [The LORD] will say: "Where are their gods, The rock in which they sought refuge?" While on the other hand, this also refers to the final sentence of the entire novel where Levin, now reconciled, thinks "I shall still be as unable to understand with my reason *why I* pray, and *I shall still go on praying*."

Tolstoy emphasizes the custom of prayer in the life of the lower classes and in childhood. "The old peasant turned to the east to say his prayer before dining" and later said his bedtime prayer (18: 268). "The little old priest, a little old man with a scanty grizzled beard and weary, good-natured eyes" customarily prays before taking Levin's confession (19: 6). Everything in the prayer of Seryozha Karenin comes true:

> ...he suddenly remembered her [*Anna*], and prayed in his own words that his mother tomorrow for his birthday might leave off hiding herself and come to him. (19: 98)

The entire clergy and the unseen choir, the whole church and the parish[14] pray as if breathing naturally, in the betrothal episode of Levin and Kitty:

[11] Seen through the mythopoeic approach, the name Matröna, or Matrona is no accident. Tolstoy began to write the novel at about the time of the commemoration of St. Matrona (March 27, old style; the feast day of St. Matrona of Thessalonica). In addition, the etymology of the name of the nanny is from Lat. mātrona (*married woman*) and māter (*mother*) refers to the mythological archetypes of the Great Mother (common mythological archetype — Magna Mater) and the folklore images of a fairy-tale old woman who gives the hero magical items. Seen through the functional approach to narrative structure, a scheme arises, described in terms of "Morphology of the Tale" by Vladimir Propp as: "chaos, insufficiency) → a search for a solution → an assistant (a wondrous helper), presenting a magic resource → denouement ", — where prayer is summoned to fulfill the function of a magic ball with a guiding thread, a self-swinging sword, an enchanted self-playing gusla, a spell freeing victims from enchantments, etc.

[12] All quotations of the novel are given according to the classical translation by C. Garnett.

[13] Tolstoy intended to write a novel about the challenges of Christian faith in nineteenth century Russia. In doing so, he rewrote Paul's Letter to the Romans in a manner consistent with his own emphasis upon the importance of the natural life (Moran 163).

[14] Another characteristic detail of Tolstoy's conceptual apparatus (i.e. his conceptual sphere): in the Russian language, the meaning of these two words "*obschína*" (a local community) and "*prikhód*" (a Church parish) are united by the collective noun "mir" (*миръ*).

> *They prayed, as they always do*, for peace from on high and for salvation, for the Holy Synod, and for the Tsar; they prayed, too, for the servants of God, Konstantin and Ekaterina, now plighting their troth.
> "Vouchsafe to them love made perfect, peace and help, O Lord, we beseech Thee," the whole church seemed to breathe with the voice of the head deacon. (19: 19)

The author never refers to prayer by any of the Vronskys, Oblonskys or Shtcherbatskys, except for Kitty and her mother.[15] Nor does Levin's elder, half-brother Sergey Koznishev pray, or his beloved M-lle Várenka whose romance comes to nothing.

The author almost always treats the prayers of the aristocrats with a touch of irony:

> Prince Nikolay Sviazhsky, a liberal landlord: "You should try purgative medicine. Taken: worse. Try leeches. Tried them: worse. Well, then, there's nothing left but to pray to God. Tried it: worse. That's just how it is with us" (18: 355)

> Count Stepan (Stiva) Oblonsky: "To be saved, one need only believe […] And what stuff it is she's reading! but she has a good accent?"[16] (19: 316)

The same applies to the prayer (or in this case, the silent meditation) of Countess Lidia Ivanovna in the episode of Karenin's "conversion" to faith, with a tone of great astonishment: "She began praying, as Alexey Alexandrovitch gathered from her silence" (19: 80).

The author's remarks emphasize the routine detachment of Dolly's perfunctory and formal prayer (the episode after her conversation with Anna):

> Left alone, Darya Alexandrovna said her prayers and went to bed. She had felt for Anna with all her heart while she was speaking to her, but now she could not force herself to think of her. (19: 217)

However, in *Anna Karenina*, noblemen mostly take the name of the Lord in vain – in interjections and interjectional phrases: *Oh, my God!*, *Thank God!*, *For God's sake!*, *Merciful God! For pity's sake!* and so on.

Thus, in Tolstoy's novel, the prayers of the characters are grouped according to the fundamental oppositions of Rousseauism: *amour de soi* vs unnatural *amour-propre*, and *Natural* vs *Civilized*.

Prayers of Kitty and dying Nikolay Levin are at the intersection of these two groups.

The reference to Kitty's prayers bears signs of ambivalence. The first is a perfunctory and formal prayer following her choice between Levin and Vronsky:

> Whether she felt remorse at having won Levin's love, or at having refused him, she did not know. But her happiness was poisoned by doubts. "Lord, have pity on us; Lord, have pity on us; Lord, have pity on us!" she repeated to herself, till she fell asleep. (18: 59)

There are her later prayers:

> Kitty listened to the words of the prayer, trying to make out their meaning, but she could not. The feeling of triumph and radiant happiness flooded her soul more and more as the ceremony went on, and deprived her of all power of attention (the betrothal episode; 19: 24)

[15] Her motive for prayer is fear of "the unknown future" (18: 61), a kind of futurophobia.

[16] After the scene with Countess Lidia Ivanovna and conversations about salvation by grace alone (*sola gratis*) and/or through faith alone (*sola fide*).

> "I am very glad I persuaded him to receive extreme unction tomorrow […] I have never seen it, but I know, mamma has told me, there are prayers said for recovery." (19: 67; in passing reference on the eve of Nikolay Levin's death, while preening herself in front of the looking-glass, "combing her soft, fragrant hair with a fine comb")

The author notes the ambiguity Nikolay's last prayers:

> During the ceremony[17] Nikolay Levin *prayed fervently*. […] his present return was not a legitimate one, […] *but simply a temporary, interested*[18] *return* to faith in a desperate hope of recovery. […] Kitty had strengthened his hope by accounts of the marvelous recoveries she had heard of. (19:68)

Levin, Anna and Alexey Karenin are in a special group. As they evolve as humans, so change their attitudes to praying.

Tolstoy emphasizes the duality of Alexey Karenin's prayers who had the reputation of a "clever, learned, religious somewhat" (18: 63) statesman. On the one hand, the prayers of the exalted Princess Lidia "now seemed to him natural and consolatory", while on the other hand, Alexey Alexandrovitch had disliked this new enthusiastic fervor (19: 80). Nevertheless, Karenin summed up his feelings: "'"I am very, very grateful to you, both for your deeds and for your words," he said, when she had finished praying" (19: 81).

On the one hand, his motivation is mainly based on *amour-propre*. So, Tolstoy pointed out a notable detail of Karenin's thoughts: the first argument against divorce was the "value to be attached to public opinion and to decorum", and only the third one "the calamity possibly ensuing to our son" (18: 152). But on the other hand, he was also a victim of the unscrupulous machinations of Anna's aunt, who forced *homo novus* to an arranged marriage[19] with princess Anna Oblonsky (Karenina)[20]:

> While he was governor of a province, Anna's aunt, a wealthy provincial lady, had thrown him […] with her niece, and had succeeded in putting him in such a position that he had either to declare himself or to leave the town. […] There were at the time as many reasons for the step as against it […]. But Anna's aunt had through a common acquaintance insinuated that he had already compromised the girl, and that he was in honor bound to make her an offer. (19: 77)

According to Tolstoy, Karenin and Vronsky are hostages of *amour-propre*. But while Alexey Vronsky is a victim of his own passions, then Alexey Karenin also looks like the victim of other people's passions, – *guilty without fault*, in the incomprehensible to him fatal and tragic situation.

In the first chapters, Alexey Karenin was described as a high-rank bureaucrat, "who was interested in religion primarily in its political aspect" (19: 80). But later he reflected on his faith and had experienced authentic spiritual transformation – Karenin adopted Annie (the daughter of Anna and Vronsky) as his own. At the turn of the 20th century, Tolstoy has returned to this

[17] During the rite of communion and extreme unction.

[18] Tolstoy's epithet "корыстное" literally means *self-serving* (return).

[19] He was an orphan from the age of 10 and rose through the ranks thanks to the patronage of his rich relative, a favorite of the late Tsar (i.e., Nicholas I), and his own careerism. It is unlikely that the nobleman Karenin was a Count/Graf from birth. In 19th century, title of Graf was sometimes conferred by the Emperor on persons who have rendered special service to the Russian Empire. From 1856 to 1908, the title of count was granted only 88 times for extra-ordinal military or long-term outstanding administrative services. Karenin has become the knight of the Imperial Order of St. Alexander Nevsky (19:93). It was a sign of his entering a narrow circle of top-level statesmen.

[20] For more information, see: Zalambani.

theme once again. He had analyzed possible variants of this conflict resolution in *The Living Corpse* (1900; there the main character was named Viktor Karenin) and the short story *Kornéy Vasiliev* (1906).

The title character's attitude to prayer is more complicated. During the editing of the novel, Tolstoy removed the following words about the evolution of her faith: "Anna lived and moved in the highest refined Orthodox circle of St. Petersburg and was fascinated by it" (20: 668). This fragment found in the drafts also was not included in the final text:

> Anna recalled how she earlier used to pray to God in a childlike way; then Alexey Alexandrovich and Lydia Ivanovna undermined her childlike attitude towards prayer, and how she had tried to enter into their spirit, but could not and how […] after reading Renan's "Life of Jesus" [1863], it became clear to her what a ridiculous and unnecessary deception this was. (20: 546-547)

Nevertheless, strange, ambiguous details associated with her prayers were left in. First, Anna prays after the scene of the climactic meeting when "that desire had been fulfilled": "My God! Forgive me!" she said, sobbing, pressing his [Vronsky's] hands to her bosom" (18: 157).

Secondly, Anna makes the sign of the cross before committing the unforgivable sin of suicide[21] (19: 348). Her only repentant and desperate prayer is "Lord, forgive me for all!" coincides with the moment of death – when "something huge and *merciless* struck her on the head and rolled her on her back" (ibid.). The motive of controversial duality in Anna's mind is also suggested in the scene at Obirálovka railway station:

> She repeated continually, "My God! My God!" But neither "God" nor "my" had any meaning to her. The idea of seeking help in her difficulty in religion was as remote from her as seeking help from Alexey Alexandrovitch himself, although she had never had doubts of the faith in which she had been brought up […]. She felt as though everything were beginning to be double in her soul, just as objects sometimes appear double to over-tired eyes. (18: 305)

Paradoxically, the main motive for Anna's suicide is not escapism, but an irresistible desire to protect Seryozha and reconcile both Alexeys – Karenin and Vronsky (as it almost happened earlier during her illness):

> "Why didn't I die? […] Yes, to die!... And the shame and disgrace of Alexey Alexandrovitch and of Seryozha, and my awful shame, it *will all be saved by death*."[22] (19:324)

Konstantin Levin[23] might be viewed as the main *precant* among all characters of the novel. On the one hand, Tolstoy's "family idea" is expressed by him and through him. On the other

[21]There is another example of Tolstoy's style of *sopryazhénie* (*сопряжéние*, linkage of details, thoughts, actions, destinies). A few pages earlier, the same gesture by her companion in the carriage produced feelings of rancor in her mind: "The man in her carriage crossed himself. "It would be interesting to ask him what meaning he attaches to that," thought Anna..." (19: 346).

[22] Her words sound like an unconscious irreverent paraphrase of the Paschal hymns *Trampling down death by death*, or *By death conquering death*.

[23] According to the norms of the Russian language of the 19th century, the noble surname was Lyóvin (Лёвинъ). The first translators of the novel fixed this correct old-time spelling of the surname of Tolstoy's alter-ego – Konstantin Lyóvin, as well as real name of the writer – Lyóv, Lyóf (Лёвъ). Tolstoy pronounced his name as "Лёв", not "Лев" (see his phonographic letter to Nikolai Davydov. April 11, 1908: http://tolstoy.ru/dl/audio/19.ogg). In the Russian orthography, the letter Ё [yó] received official

hand, the author closely intertwined Kitty and Levin's romance with the story of acquiring faith. J. Avalon noted: "He searches for faith in his love for Kitty" (32), – reiterating Rıo Gustafson's thesis: "Unbeknown to him [Levin], his *mission to find love is a quest for faith*" (Gustafson 135). In *Tolstoy Studies Journal of North American Tolstoy Society*, C. Fort performed a noteworthy analysis of the textual connections between the epigraph and Levin's storyline in the novel[24].

There are many episodes in the novel where Levin prays himself, or is present when prayers are being said, or participates in praying. However, only four of his prayers are reproduced verbatim, in his direct speech:

1) "Forgive me not according to my unworthiness, but according to Thy loving-kindness[25]" (18: 43);

2) "If Thou dost exist, make this man to recover (of course this same thing was repeated many times), and thou wilt save him and me" (prayer at the bedside of his dying brother; 19: 69);

3) "Lord have mercy on us! pardon us! aid us!" he repeated the words that for some reason came suddenly to his lips. And he, an unbeliever, repeated these words not with his lips only. At that instant he knew that all his doubts, even the impossibility of believing with his reason, of which he was aware in himself, did not in the least hinder his turning to God (at the birth of his son; 19: 286);

4) "My God! My God! not on them!" (the scene of thunder; 19: 394).

It appears that finding primary sources of these prayers would open new research perspectives.

"Forgive me not according to my unworthiness, but according to Thy loving-kindness" possesses no analogue in Orthodox prayers. This phrase originates with St. Augustin's thesis of God's sovereign grace and human kinds free will: "The Grace of God is Not Given According to Merit, But Itself Makes All Good Desert."[26] In the Russian translation it is taken from the 23rd chapter of *A Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* by Blessed Henry Suso (Koreñkova and Koreñkov 89):

> "Ah, gentle Lord, art Thou not He who with one word created heaven and earth? Lord, with one word canst Thou restore health to my sick soul. O Lord, *do unto me according to Thy grace, according to Thy infinite mercy, and not according to my deserts.*"[27]

After Henry Suso's beatification by the Catholic Church in 1831, his works have been published several times in Germany (Regensburg 1837, Augsburg 1851, Leipzig, 1861) and France (Lyon–Paris, 1840, Paris 1852, 1856).

recognition in 1783/1795, and indicates a distinct sound from E [e / ɛ]. But the lack of mandatory rules on the usage of the youngest Russian letter in texts had led to many words, names and surnames getting transliterated incorrectly.

[24] Curiously, few commentators have discussed Levin in relation to the epigraph […] With the exception of Medzhibovskaya and Wachtel, who each devote portions of their arguments to the matter, studies of Anna Karenina do not focus on positioning Levin in relation to the epigraph; however, Tolstoy fully intended his participation (Fort 12)

[25]This important prayer is mentioned by Tolstoy in a letter to Afanasy Fet from April 16-17, 1879 (62: 483).

[26] St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. *A Treatise on grace and free will*. Ch. 13.

[27] *A Prayer To Be Said When Thou Goest To Receive Our Lord's Holy Body. Ch. XXIII*. Cit. by: *Henry Suso's Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*. Transl. by R.R. Boston: Thomas B. Noonan & Co, 1887. p.181). The Middle High German original: Owe, zarter herr, tu̍ mir nach diner gnade, nach diner grundlosen erbermde, und nit nach minem verdienenne.

N.N. Gusev wrote: "Tolstoy wasn't a bibliophile and didn't keep his books, but willingly gave it to everyone who wanted to read. As a result, many books that we know for certain that Tolstoy read them with a pencil in his hands are no longer available in the Yasnaya Polyana library" (*Leo Tolstoy in the memoirs of contemporaries in 2 volumes*, vol. 2, 361).[28] Therefore, there is no clear evidence that Tolstoy read any of these publications. However, he had access to libraries of descendants or relatives of Russian Freemasons (Lopukhin; Odoevsky). While working on *War and peace*, Tolstoy read masonic manuscripts from collections of M.Yu.Vielgorsky, S.S.Lanskoy in the Rumyantsev library in Moscow. Tolstoy's consultants knew ideas of a famous popularizer of Suso's heritage Joseph Görres.[29] So, Tolstoy may have been familiar with the Rhenish mystics through quotes and masonic retellings.

Another possible source of this Levin's prayer is the phrase by a Calvinist pastor: "Pourtant, mon Dieu, traitte moy comme ta pauvre creature paternellement, *non selon mes merites, mais selon la grandeur de tes misericordes*."[30]

The second Levin's prayer ("Lord have mercy on us! pardon us! aid us!") is an abbreviated version of one of the most common prayers: 1) "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner" (The Jesus Prayer); 2) "Oh, Lord! bless and save us / protect us", "Guard my life, save your servant" and "O You my God, save Your servant [who trusts in You]" (from Psalm 86); 3) "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; [according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions]" (from Psalm 50); 4) "Lord, have mercy! Lord, forgive us!", as well as the ancient Russian variation of *Kyrie eleison* "O Lord, have mercy! O Lord, I'm sorry / forgive me, a [penitent] sinner" by Saint Aréfa, a venerable hermit and recluse from the Kiev Pechersk Monastery.

The paradoxical prayer "Lord, if you exist ..." has the closest chronological correspondence in the Orthodox tradition only in 1915 — in a biography of ascetic of piety (!) Abbot Nikon (Nikolai N. Vorobiev; 1894-1963): "Lord, if you exist, reveal yourself to me! I am looking for You not for any earthly, selfish purposes. I need only one thing: do You exist, or do You not?" (diary entry, 1915; Nikon 13). Therefore, most likely, the direct sources of the third Levin's prayer are a quote from *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864) by J.G. Newman, the leader of the Oxford Movement: "O God, if there is a God, save my soul if I have a soul."[31] This aphorism was also well-known in Europe as the *Prayer of the agnostic* by Ernest Renan.[32] Tolstoy mentioned in the drafts of the novel that Anna Karenina had read Renan's book.

The fourth Levin's prayer is particularly remarkable. From one hand, it was the first time he prayed not for himself, but for others. From the other hand, it can be interpreted as a sort of reflexive praying[33]. In Tolstoy's fictional world prayers come true when the characters speak spontaneously, "in their own words," on a whim or inspiration from a higher power: Seryozha's prayer for his mother's arrival, and Levin's prayer during a thunderstorm about his beloved ones, and so on. [34]

[28] There is no doubt that he had been especially cautious after an incident with a police agent provocateur (Mikhaylo Shipov, aka "Zimin") and the shocking gendarmerie search in Yasnaya Polyana (July 6-7, 1862).

[29] For more information, see: Titov 122-124.

[30] Duvernoy 185; for more information, see: Chenot.

[31] Newman 78. (The prayer of a common soldier before the battle of Blenheim, 1704).

[32] O Dieu, s'il y a un Dieu, sauve mon âme si j'ai une âme.

[33] Reflexive praying in a moment of potential disaster (Fort 20).

[34] Even Karenin "knew that when, without the slightest idea that *his forgiveness was the action of a higher power*, he had surrendered directly to the feeling of forgiveness, he had felt more happiness than now" (19: 82).

During the period of writing *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy's "family idea" crystallized into concept of the "natural faith"[35] and "natural (i.e. naive, spontaneous, earnest) prayers." A window to an unconscious truth[36] that cannot be captured by the word, is opened when speech, spirit, soul and will are united in a single impulse leading to a synthesis of reason, emotion, faith, and humility.

Thus, the analysis of the prayers in the novel, and especially four prayers of Tolstoy's *alter ego* (Levin), revealed the noticeable influence of both Rousseauism and Western Christianity (Catholic and Calvinist sources) on Tolstoy's religious views.

This fact is not surprising, given the spiritual atmosphere of the last decade of Alexander II's reign. By the 1870s, the Russian Synodal Bible (The Synodal Translation non-Church Slavonic, 1860–67) was published and hotly debated. This edition caused a surge of interest of all classes of Russian society. It was then that new unorthodox spiritual movements became widespread among Russians, such as the Shtundists (first mentioned in 1868), the Subbotniks (attempt to gain legal status in 1873), St. Petersburg evangelical revival (the "Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Ethical Reading", since1874), the "Brothers' Society for exploring the Bible" (since 1877).

Nevertheless, when Tolstoy was starting out in writing the novel, he was inspired by the motives of old Russian epic poems (*Danilo Lovchanin and Vasilísa Nikúlichna*, *Churílo Plyonkovich and Katerina Mikúlichna*) and collections of religious writings *Minei-Chet'i*[37]. In 1874-75, while Tolstoy was working on *Anna Karenina*, simultaneously he compiled a collection of the lives of orthodox saints for popular reading. Therefore, there is reason to assume that the story of Levin's quest for faith – the path to salvation, as it has been delineated by Tolstoy, has its parallels in Orthodox hagiography (Grodetskaya*, Otvety* 57, 98-9, 109-110, 157-8, 202-4).[38] So, in the *Lives of saints* (*the Menology*) of St. Dimitry of Rostov, Tolstoy noted at least 20 hagiographic stories about "struggle with fornication" (Grodetskaya *Agiograficheskiye* 473).[39]

In choosing contemporary Russian Orthodox authors, Tolstoy primarily singled out Filaret of Moscow (†1867; was canonized in 1994). The earliest mention of the name of Filaret by Tolstoy was in a diary entry on March 23, 1858. In the 1860 and 70s, Tolstoy studied the works of the Metropolitan of Moscow and mentioned his name among best Russian authors, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Lomonosov (*Progress and the Definition of Education*, 1862/1863, letter to Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstaya in December, 1874).

It seems that Tolstoy's penchant for religious universalism inspired his interest in studying works of Filaret who was one of the active participants in the revival of the interfaith

[35] Tolstoy constantly points out the naturalness or the unnaturalness (*yestestvennost'* / *neyestestvennost'*) of his characters' behavior in certain episodes.

[36] This idea was presented in the well-known works of Tolstoy's older contemporaries: "A Voice in an Immeasurable Abyss: There is no complete expression for me!" (Prince V.F.Odoevsky. *Russian Nights*, 1844); "A thought once uttered is untrue", "A thought, once spoken, is a lie" (F.I.Tyutchev. *Silentium!*, 1830-33; transl. versions by Vladimir Nabokov and Robert Chandler). Tolstoy quoted this stanza from *Silentium!* in the draft of *Anna Karenina* (20: 671).

[37] Monthly Readings (a Menology) is a service-book used in the Eastern Orthodox Church, an ecclesiastical calendar, collections of saints' lives, sermons, homilies, tales, and legends, arranged according to the days of the month.

[38] Grodetskaya shows the parallels between Levin's life and the life of St. Justin, the Defender of the "true philosophy."

[39] While writing the novel, Tolstoy was also attracted by *The life of the Holy Martyr Justin* (1874-75; 17: 136-37). The story of the saint philosopher, who came to a knowledge of God not through philosophical discussion, but through a feat of prayer, has explicit parallel with Levin's intellectual and prayerful evolution.

dialogue.[40] There is no doubt that, in the early 1870s, Tolstoy generally sympathized with opinions expressed by Filaret in *The meaning of the Church prayer for the Union of Churches* (1860), especially in the fragment where the Metropolitan had highlighted the words of Basil the Great: "End the schism of the Churches (Russian: «утоли раздоры церквей»)."[41]

The study of the prayer system in the novel, its origins and textual parallels demonstrates that *Anna Karenina* is not a novel about adultery or a love-story itself. Indeed, a "love triangle is a plot for a melodrama, but Karenina is the heroine of the tragedy" (Drubich). Therefore, the question arises: how did a novel about adultery and social injustice develops into a novel about "family idea," gaining faith, Divine predestination, and spiritual transformation?

In the beginning of 1870s, the first source for future plot nodes of nascent Tolstoy's story were previously mentioned Russian epic poems. These *bylinas* describe two types of the love triangle conflict resolutions: 1) in the Feast of the Annunciation, a devout old husband (Bermyáta) kills his young cheating wife and her handsome lover in a fit of jealousy (*Churílo and Katerina*); 2) a version of Bathsheba's story — loyal spouses were victims of a court conspiracy: a honest knight Danilo fell in battle, and his faithful wife Vasilisa killed herself during a forced second wedding (*Danílo Lovchánin*). Later, first draft versions of the novel describe slightly transformed love triangle: a passionate woman (Nana, Anna Stavróvich) destroys lives of her honest, but weak-willed husband and her noble lover Gágin[42] (Zhdanov 805-9; 814-7). Adding a new love triangle "Konstantin—Kitty—Gagin" (807-9) made the plot more intricate but did not change the overall dramatic character of the nascent novel.

The well-known epigraph "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" has been included by Tolstoy only in the draft of the eighth version of the first part (818). This fact marked a shift of focus from the drama of interpersonal relationships to tragic guilt (nature of sin, sinfulness) of characters.

Earlier, Schopenhauer's concept of free will in its dialectical connection with necessity has exerted some effect on Tolstoy's historiosophical reflections in *War and peace*. Tolstoy wrote: "Man is the creation of an all-powerful, all-good, and all-seeing God. *What is sin, the conception of which arises from the consciousness of man's freedom?* That is a question for theology" (12: 325). Tolstoy philosophy at the time of *War and peace* fluctuated between fatalism, historical determinism and ethical optimism.[43] But after the "Arzamas horror", Tolstoy was fervent looking for a way to acquire the Christian faith.

In 1874, in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy returned to this theme. He looked at these issues from a perspective of the Christian virtue of sacred unselfishness, the antinomy of hustle bustle of the mundane life and Divine Care, Kant's idea of transcendental freedom ("absolute spontaneity"), and Schopenhauer's concepts of (illusion of) moral freedom, mystery of transcendental Freedom, as opposed to "necessity." The writer's companions on his way to finding faith through religious self-knowledge were the main characters of the novel: Anna and Levin (and even to some extent Karenin).

After all the trials and tribulations that Levin faced, he has achieved such a true freedom: "I have been set free from falsity, I have found the Master" (19: 378). His transcendental freedom is based on the concept of good: "conception of right […] which *has been revealed to me as*

[40] His conversations with Anglican theologians William Palmer (The Oxford Movement, 1840), John Freeman Young (Russo-Greek Committee, 1864), bishop Robert Eden (the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1867) set the stage for the Bonn inter-Christian "Reunion Conferences" of 1874 and 1875.

[41] End the schisms of the churches; quench the ragings of the nations (*Hymn to the Theotokos*).

[42] Later, Udashev, aka Vronsky.

[43] For more information on the discussion between Sir Isaiah Berlin, Dmitry Likhachev, et al., see: Koreñkova and Koreñkov*, Literatura* 84-86).

a Christian[44] […] It is a secret for me alone, of vital importance for me, and not to be put into words" (19: 399).

It seems that Levin's words are not only the echo Schopenhauer's ideas of self-knowledge, the awareness of our own desires, affects, emotions, wishing and willing and prayers as a confession and the autosuggestion of good,[45] but also the reverberation of the famous prayer of Filaret the Metropolitan of Moscow:

> "My Lord, I do not know what to ask of Thee. *Thou alone knowest what I need*. Thou lovest me more than I know how to love myself. O Father, grant Thy servant what *I myself do not know how to ask*. I do not dare to ask a cross of Thee, nor consolation; I only stand before Thee with my heart open; *Thou seest the needs that I myself do not know*. Look, and *work in me according to Thy mercy* [...]. I offer myself as a sacrifice to Thee. No other desire is mine but to fulfill Thy will. *Teach me to pray. Do Thou Thyself pray in me*. Amen."[46]

The common points of the principles of Tolstoy (as a schopenhauerian thinker at that years) and Filaret's prayer are obvious: 1) The recognition of Divine Incomprehensibility and the certainty of infinity of Grace (of a transcendent God); 2) awareness of the limitation of human wisdom; 3) the recognition of possibility to become a partaker of the Holy Spirit through fervent prayer; 4) the recognition of necessity learning how to pray. But here also appears the first discrepancy between Tolstoy and Filaret. It was not conspicuous in the beginning but significant in the future: the Metropolitan wrote in his Catechism: "One can become a partaker of the Holy Spirit through fervent prayer *and through the Sacraments*,"[47] while Tolstoy (and Levin as his alter-ego) doubt the efficacy of Church rituals.[48]

By the end of the 1870s, Tolstoy's attitude to the famous Orthodox theologian was beginning to change. Thus, in the last part of *Anna Karenina*, Levin's reasoning in disputes over the 'Slavonic Question' coincide with Tolstoy's criticism of *An Extensive Christian Catechism*. During the Russian-Ottoman war (1877-78)[49], the differences between Tolstoy's principles and Filaret's *Catechism* regarding the commandment "thou shalt not kill" became very severe. By 1879, Tolstoy became a fierce opponent of Filaret (in the *Critique of Dogmatic Theology* and the treatise *What I Believe*, 1882-1884). At last, Tolstoy decided to rework Filaret's *Catechism* and began work on his own *Catechism* (*Christian teaching*, 1895).

5. Conclusions

In 1870–1877, the evolution of Tolstoy's religious ideas followed the general trends of the Christian revival in Russia and in the world. In addition to Rousseau and Schopenhauer's heritage he was interested in new unofficial phenomena in Eastern Orthodox and Western

[44] Literally: «понимание добра, которое […] открыто мне христианством».

[45] Literally in Tolstoy's *A Calendar of Wisdom*: "Prayer is a confession, a verification of past actions and an indication of the direction of future actions" (41: 127), and "prayer is the autosuggestion of good" (42: 287).

[46] There are some parallels between the texts Filaret's prayer and *A Prayer to God* by François Fénelon. For more information, see: Tsukanov *Nauchi menya molit'sya*…

[47] *An Extensive Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church* (1823/39) by Filaret. *§248. How can we become partakers of the Holy Spirit?*

[48] Levin's confession of faith: "My chief sin is doubt. I have doubts of everything."

[49] Less than a month after visiting Optina pustyn, Tolstoy visited Tula and met with Turkish prisoners of war (August 15-20, 1877; 48: 399).

Christianity, and pure and simple traditions of early Christians. First of all Tolstoy was interested in the history of converts, texts, practices of mystical prayers, divine meditation, the deification, as well as in self-commentaries to the personal prayer experience by Filaret, medieval mystics, hesychasts, members of Russian spiritual movements of "stárchestvo" (eldership) and aristocratic evangelical Radstockism-Pashkovism.

Tolstoy's views on the prayerful experience (*the prayerology*) and prayers as a confession that emerged during his work on *Anna Karenina* was manifested in the composition of the novel and describing depths of the psychology of the main characters. Later, the key features of this concept were echoed in Tolstoy's religious, philosophical and aesthetic works of the 1880s and 1900s, as well as in his fiction — *Resurrection* (1889-99), *Hadji Murat* (1894-1904 / publ. 1912), and short stories (*Father Sergius*, 1890/ publ. 1911; *Diary of a Madman*, 1884 / publ. 1912, etc.).

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